

Crazy. But Crazy Together. by minervajeanelupin

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Summary:

5 times Mike thought he'd lost Will and the one time he realized that would never happen.

Crazy. But Crazy Together.

Author's Note:

This is the first fic I've written in like a month of so, and the first Stranger Things fic I've ever written, so I'd really appreciate kudos and comments or advice! There really aren't enough byler fics out there.

I. This was not supposed to happen.

The good guys weren't supposed to die. They just *weren't*. In every comic book he and his friends had pored over together, in every game of Dungeons and Dragons that had taken weeks to plan, the good guys always managed to escape near death and save the world in the process.

And yet, Mike stared with wide, hopeless eyes as they carried out the body of the best person he had ever known.

He remembered meeting Will on the first day of school, the countless times they'd sat together, worrying about mundane fears that would surely never occur and enjoying each other's company, the day Will, who felt too guilty to cheat at a game Mike had poured his heart and soul into, looked at him solemnly as the lights flickered overhead and said, "The Demogorgon. It got me." All that, now gone.

Will's body seemed even more frail than it normally did, his usually rosy and pale skin tinted unhealthily with blue, and his bright eyes remained tightly shut, no longer being able to see the world in his imaginative and creative way any longer. And it wasn't fair.

Mike stared at him numbly, not being able to feel the cold metal of the bike he was clutching desperately for support, nor the hushed and mournful voice of Dustin and Lucas trying to process the terrible thing they had just seen.

He turned to El, who was standing behind them.

"You lied to us," he said quietly, unable to believe it. He thought...

he thought he'd be able to trust her. He thought he'd actually be able to find Will! She had finally given him hope for the first time since Will had gone missing, and now it was all crashing down.

"You lied!" he nearly screamed, though he could barely hear anything over the pounding of his heart. She flinched, but he couldn't find it in himself to care. Friends. Don't. Lie. Especially about something as important as this.

His friends tried to get him to calm down, Dustin whispering to him about how the adults nearby would hear and Lucas glaring at El until she retreated back. Mike felt a small flicker of guilt, but it didn't really matter, nor could he find it in himself to care. He allowed himself to be ushered away as he couldn't stop staring at Will's lifeless body. Why couldn't it have been him instead?

Will Byers, the sweetest and most creative and understanding (and prettiest) boy he knew, was gone.

II. "Is that... is that Will?" Mike whispered softly. El nodded and Mike turned back, straining to hear his friend's voice again. Will seemed to be softly singing his favorite song by The Clash, and it sent shivers down Mike's spine. He had only heard Will sing once before, and had decided not to talk about it as the boy had been very embarrassed when he found out Mike could hear him.

Not that there was anything to be embarrassed about, of course—Will's voice was almost as good as his art skills, both of which Mike would be jealous of if he didn't know how much Will got bullied over them, and how many slurs he was called on a daily basis.

Mike remembered how he finally decided one day that enough was enough and tried to fight back against one of Will's worst tormentors, Troy. Needless to say, it hadn't ended well, but he would always treasure how afterwards Will cradled his bruised head in his hands and asked him, shakily, why he was such an idiot when Will didn't even mind the bullying so much. Mike had replied that Will was worth it, and reveled in the slight blush that colored his friend's face. It was one of his fondest memories.

Will's voice could barely be heard with all the static coming from the walkie-talkie, and his voice was even softer than it usually was, but it was still there. Will was there, and he was somehow talking to them.

"Will?" Dustin called out and Mike almost asked him to be quiet so he could hear more of his friend's voice. It fueled him, made him feel hopeful for the first time since he'd seen the corpse... which surely *had* to be fake now. Will wasn't dead. Will wasn't dead!

And then, suddenly, his voice was lost.

"No, no, no..." Mike chanted desperately as he tried to adjust the walkie-talkie but got nothing but silence in reply. He had been so close and now Will was once again out of Mike's grasp. He turned to El.

"Where is he? Is there any way we can get him back?" he asked, his eyes wide with anguish but slight hope, pleading her to somehow find a way to their lost friend.

Because whatever she offered, he would take it. He would do anything to help his friend. He just need to know *how*.

III. Halloween had always been one of Mike's favorite holidays.

Not only was it an entire day dedicated to gorging on candy taken from strangers- what wasn't there to love about that?- it was also the day his friend looked happiest.

Will had always had a stranger connection to the supernatural. He loved horror movies and was the cleric for the party, not to mention the whole getting-trapped-in-a-parallel-universe thing. That sort of ruined all things supernatural for Will, but Mike was determined to make this the best Halloween ever for him. God knows that poor kid deserved it.

There were a couple of hitches, of course. First him and Lucas got into a fight about who was supposed to be Venkman. Then they had *another* fight, this time about Max, with Dustin jumping in as well.

“Did you invite her?” Mike couldn’t stop himself from saying in an accusing tone, glaring slightly at the red-head walking in between his other friends.

“Hm?” Will asked, looking up from where he was staring at the ground. “Oh, yeah, I thought it was okay.”

Mike scowled and felt a surge of jealousy. He thought that Will, at least, would have been on his side. Will usually tried to stay out of arguments, but he still did agree with Mike more often than not. It was weird not having him on his side. And he didn’t like it.

“She’s ruining Halloween,” Mike grumbled. He stormed off, keeping a careful distance away from that redhead and his traitor friends. All he wanted was for them to have a normal Halloween together, just how it was before Will left. But she ruined that.

He reluctantly followed them into one of the houses Max suggested. He was about to take a candy bar from the bag the adult was offering when he heard Will outside calling his name.

“Mike? Mike?” the sound was faint but desperate. Mike cursed, much to the disapproval of the parent, and ran back out the house.

“Will?” he called out, looking around.

“Will!” he called again when there was no answer. He couldn’t see Will anywhere. Then he caught a glimpse of his beige outfit and ran after him. By the time he caught up to him, Will was crouched down, his eyes tightly shut, a terrified look on his face. Mike’s heart broke. He knew about the nightmares, but he didn’t know how bad they were until now.

“Will!” he called out once again, laying a comforting hand on Will’s shoulder. Will tensed and his eyes flew open, wild and unseeing until they focused on Mike.

“What happened?” Dustin asked. Without Mike realizing, the rest of the party (and Max) had followed him.

“What’s wrong with him?” Max asked. Mike glared at her. It wasn’t any of her business and besides, there was nothing *wrong* with Will.

Will gave him a pleading look, clearly wanting to get away, and Mike held him stand up.

“I’ll take him home,” he said. “I wasn’t having fun anyway.” With one last glare at Max, he left, Will leaning on him slightly.

And yes, that meant missing Halloween. But Will was more important than a dumb holiday anyway.

IV. “And- and you said yes,” Mike said, trying his hardest not to get choked up. “It was the best thing I’d ever done.”

He tried to resist the urge to take Will’s cold, fraile hand in his. He stared into his friend’s dark eyes, and thought he saw a glimmer of recognition and emotion in them. It was gone as quick as it came, but Mike tried to focus on it and imagine his friend as he usually was- the small, smart, and unbelievably sweet boy who never failed to make Mike smile. Until now.

“C’mon, Will,” he whispered under his breath, though he thought Will might be able to hear him, somehow. “Please. I love you.”

He widened his eyes when he realized what he had said, and looked around carefully to make sure no one had heard. He turned back to stare into Will’s eyes desperately when he saw that everyone else was focused on Will.

He... he had never really realized this himself, but suddenly it all made sense.

Will’s mouth seemed to part slightly, as though in surprise, and Mike’s heart leapt with relief. Maybe he had heard him?

There was a silence for a moment, the sort of silence that seems to last forever and only a moment at the same time. Will and Mike stared at each other intently, a battle of wills Mike wished was be over so he could just get his friend back. Will’s lips parted slightly and Mike’s heart jumped in elation when he said-

“Let. Me. Go.” Will’s words were cold and unemotional, nothing like

how the boy sounded usually. Mike knew that behind him, Jonathan and Joyce were exchanging sad and disappointed look, but he couldn't tear his eyes away from Will's.

"Hang on, Will, please?" he whispered.

And though he knew it was probably just his subconscious showing him what he wished desperately was true, he thought he saw a flash of understanding in Will's eyes. But it was gone as soon as it came and Will's eyes remained as dark and lifeless as they were since that day Mike found him standing rigidly on the school field, twitching slightly as though battling an enemy only he could see. And he was. He always had been, ever since he arrived from that awful parallel universe, and maybe even before that. Mike cursed himself for not being able to see it earlier. He should have done something, he should have done *more*.

"I'm sorry..." he whispered, knowing the boy sitting in front of him wouldn't be able to hear his apology. "I'm so sorry..."

And he knew Will might never return. That his warm and bright eyes might remain dark abysses that held no light. And he couldn't do anything to change that. But he could try.

V. The worst thing, Mike thought, about being in love with your best friend is that everyone thinks he's gay when only you know he's not.

Sure, even Mike had hopes at one point. (Of course, he never acted on them because he didn't exactly *know* he was in love with the boy with a stupidly adorable bowl cut and breathtaking smile, but still.)

Everyone in the town believed it, anyway. Troy and all the other bullies who called him uncreative and repetitive insults, Ted Wheeler who once told Mike to be wary around Will which infuriated him so much he refused to talk to his father for a week, and, of course, Will's own father, who Mike felt a strong urge to punch in the face after a day where Will broke down and cried to him about how much he hated his father but still longed for his approval (something Mike related to all too well).

But turns out every single person in the town was wrong. Well, except for the girl who asked Will to dance with her.

Will had been struck with a deer-in-headlights look (that Mike couldn't help but find endearing), and he quickly glanced at Mike as though to ask for his approval.

Ignoring the bitter taste in his mouth, Mike had gently pushed him towards the other girl. As much as it hurt him, he couldn't obstruct his friend's happiness.

He tore his eyes away when he saw someone else had entered the room. His eyes widened when he realized it was El, and he practically ran towards her.

"El!" he called out, and she turned to look at him before breaking out into a nervous smile.

"Mike," she breathed out.

"Y-you look nice," he offered. The two of them had decided that they were going to go back to just being friends for the moment. El had too much going on in her life and needed to learn the nuances of the world before getting into a relationship, and Mike...well, he was in love with another one of his friends and it didn't seem fair to El. It was mutually agreed upon, and they were now even closer than before, which Mike was thankful for.

"Do you want to dance?" he asked, noticing how El seemed uncomfortable being in such a crowded area after so long.

"I don't know how," she admitted.

"Neither do I," he replied. "But we can figure it out." Though they were no longer together, Mike was honored to be her first dance and knew she felt the same way.

Slightly awkwardly, he pulled his hands around her waist the Nancy had told her to, and she reciprocated, lightly clasping her hands around his back. They swayed around for a few moments and listened to the music, awkward and happy and *relieved* to be alive in that moment. They moved and suddenly Mike could see Will over El's

shoulder. The shorter boy seemed to be staring at them with a hurt look in his eye, but he turned back to his partner when he realized Mike was looking at him and smiled and said something to her.

Mike suddenly felt sick and he moved away from El.

“Mike?” she asked, concern seeping into her voice.

“I-I’m sorry, I need- to get air,” he choked out before walking as quickly as he could outside.

The biting cold air helped him clear up some of his thoughts and he sat down on the steps, his head in his hands.

He couldn’t bear seeing Will with her- with *anyone* - any longer without feeling a sick sensation in his stomach. He didn’t know what to do. Had he only rescued Will for him to be snatched from his grasp yet again?

+1. “Mike?” A soft voice that he would recognize anywhere called him. He tensed and turned around, seeing Will standing there, his hands in his pockets, a wobegon look on his face. Mike’s heart ached at the sight.

“You should go back inside, it’s cold,” he offered. The suit Will was wearing, though it made him look really good, Mike couldn’t help but notice, didn’t look like it provided much warmth.

“Plus I’m sure your date is missing you,” he couldn’t help but add, jealousy seeping into his voice. Will chuckled and sat next to him on the steps. Mike nearly flinched at the close proximity, which seemed ridiculous. They were best friends after all, and sitting next to each other should *not* accelerate his heart beat like that.

“I don’t mind,” Will said with a bashful smile. “Besides, I don’t think she cares so much.” Mike scoffed.

“She asked you out,” he reminded him. “You should give yourself more credit.” Even though it pained him to see them dance, if it would raise Will’s self-confidence, he was okay with it.

"I think she just likes me because of the Zombie Boy thing," Will admitted, looking a bit sad. "It's the only interesting thing about me, after all."

"Don't say that!" Mike replied fiercely. "That is by *far* the only interesting thing about you. You're the most creative person I know, as well as the strongest and most resilient and adorable, and I am beyond proud to call you my friend." Will ducked his head slightly, blushing, and Mike did too once he had reached the end of his tirade.

"You really think I'm adorable?" Will asked in a quiet voice and Mike looked over to see he was smiling. He laughed and shoved him lightly.

"All that, and that's the only part you could focus on?" Mike asked teasingly. Will shrugged, a slight smile still on his face. They sat there in silence for a moment, their knees touching, just happy to be together.

"I'm scared, you know," Will admitted all of a sudden. Mike gave him a questioning look.

"I'm afraid of going back... there. I'm afraid of leaving- of *hurting* you all," he continued. Mike put his arm around the shorter boy.

"I'm scared too," he said. "The thought of you not being here... terrifies me."

"I'll always come back," Will said in almost a desperate sort of promise. "I don't know how, but I'll always find a way. I have in the past." Mike gave him a watery, tremulous smile.

"That's what I told everyone, when you were... gone. It was really the only thing that kept me going, knowing there was even a small chance that you were still alive, and I could maybe find you some day."

"And you did," Will said softly. The two of them stared at each other for an immeasurable silence, Mike staring at his best friend's face as though he'd never see him again (and, knowing how cruel the universe was to the wide-eyed, adorable boy, it very well might be).

Suddenly, Mike couldn't even recall who, one of them leaned forward and their lips touched.

Unlike the kiss with El, it was slow and calm, as though they had a mutual understanding without saying a word. Rather than fireworks going off in Mike's head, as he'd read should happen in one of Nancy's magazines, it was peaceful and beautiful, like waves drifting on a beach before rushing back, and Mike just wanted to get lost in it, to leave all his worries and troubles behind.

Will pulled back first and Mike was going to glare at him half-heartedly for doing so when he saw the stricken look on his friend's face.

"I love you," he blurted out before mentally smacking himself of the forehead. "I- I mean-" he stuttered, trying to backpedal though there was really no explanation for that.

"Really?" Will asked, tilting his head to the side rather adorably.

"Yeah... I realized, I think, when you were gone," Mike mumbled nervously, afraid of Will's reaction. Will smiled sadly.

"Which time?" he asked rhetorically.

"But I... feel the same," he added on. Mike blinked, then broke out into a relieved smile. He put an arm his friend- and now, maybe more- and moved closer to him till their knees bumped against each other once more.

"I'm glad," he said.

And the two of them in silence in the dark. It wouldn't be easy, of course. They would have to hide their relationship from everyone they knew. And there was always the danger of the Hawkins lab, of the Shadow Monster, of the unknown... But both of them would be okay. Because they had each other. And that was all that mattered.

Author's Note:

If you ever want to talk about how Will should definitely been revealed as gay in season 3, I'd love

to hear from you at my Tumblr, [minervajeanelupin](#).